

blood, their sweat, and their sacrifice are the currency for our freedom.

Their sacrifice must never be exploited. I am honored to bring before this Chamber today legislation that ends the exploitation of veterans' finances and taxpayer dollars. A loophole exists in the GI Bill that allows some public flight schools to charge exorbitant amounts of money to veterans and taxpayers for veterans' tuition.

My legislation, the Fly Vets Act, not only stops this loophole dead in its tracks, but it empowers veterans and drastically expands their benefits. It allows them to pay for flight training through accelerated payments and allows them to double the monetary cap on both tuition and fees per year. This bill does not cut benefits in any way. It gives power back to our heroes in uniform.

I thank the many VSOs who support this legislation, along with Congresswoman UNDERWOOD for encompassing this legislation in her bill and working with me across party lines to ensure that the exploitation of veterans and taxpayers ends today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MALINOWSKI). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

VA ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2021

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4591) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress periodic reports on the costs of the Department of Veterans Affairs Electronic Health Record Modernization program, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4591

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. REPORTS ON COSTS, PERFORMANCE METRICS, AND OUTCOMES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD MODERNIZATION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 503 of the Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–407; 38 U.S.C. 5701 note prec.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f);

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following new subsection (e):

“(e) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—

“(1) REPORTS ON COSTS OF EHRM PROGRAM.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the VA Electronic Health

Record Transparency Act of 2021, and every 30 days after the last day of each fiscal quarter thereafter until the termination date specified in paragraph (3), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the costs of the Electronic Health Record Modernization program of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Each such report shall include, for the period covered by the report and for the total period beginning on the date of the enactment of the VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act of 2021 and ending on the date of the submittal of the report, a description of all actual expenses of, and driven by, such program, including any such expenses paid using—

“(A) any funds appropriated for the Department of Veterans Affairs, for any source or account, expended by any organizational element of the Department or by the Federal Electronic Health Record Modernization Office for the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program;

“(B) any funds, from any source or account, expended by any organizational element of the Department for physical or technology infrastructure modifications, enhancements, improvements, or expansions at a facility of the Department necessitated by, or related or pertaining to, the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program; and

“(C) any funds, from any source or account, expended by any organizational element of the Department or by the Federal Electronic Health Record Modernization Office for consultants, support contractors, or experts related or pertaining to the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program.

“(2) REPORTS ON PERFORMANCE METRICS AND OUTCOMES.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act of 2021, and every 30 days after the last day of each fiscal quarter thereafter until the termination date specified in paragraph (3), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the performance metrics and outcomes of the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program. Each such report shall include, for the period covered by the report—

“(A) a list of the quality, performance, safety, or value metrics, key performance indicators, and other diagnostic or evaluation criteria in use to assess the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program and the electronic health record system, in general and at individual facilities, with respect to veterans, employees of the Department, and Departmental operations;

“(B) an explanation of any change to any of such metrics, indicators, and criteria compared to the metrics, indicators, and criteria included in any previous report submitted under this paragraph;

“(C) the data supporting or demonstrating each such metric, indicator, and criteria compared to the data supporting or demonstrating such metric, indicator, or criteria as included in the previous report submitted under this paragraph; and

“(D) a list of patient safety reports, incidents, alerts, or disclosures at each facility of the Department where the electronic health record system has been implemented.

“(3) TERMINATION DATE.—The requirement to submit a report under paragraph (1) shall terminate on the date that is 90 days after the date on which the Secretary submits to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives certification that the Electronic Health Record Modernization program has been fully implemented.”; and

(3) in subsection (f), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(3) The term ‘electronic health record system’ means the electronic health record system implemented pursuant to the Electronic Health Record Modernization Program.

“(4) The term ‘Federal Electronic Health Record Management Office’ means the office established under section 1635(b) of the Wounded Warrior Act (title XVI of Public Law 110–181; 10 U.S.C. 1071 note).

“(5) The term ‘facility of the Department’ includes a joint facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4591, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4591, the VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act of 2021, as amended.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has struggled to produce reliable cost estimates and reporting on the infrastructure needs associated with its \$16 billion electronic health record modernization project. This bill is a good governance measure which will enable Congress to conduct better oversight and hold VA accountable for its spending.

It is essential that we ensure that taxpayer funds meant to serve veterans are being used properly and that VA is maintaining detailed records of its IT and physical infrastructure expenditures. We owe that to the veterans who get their care from VA and to the American taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 4591, as amended, which was unanimously supported in committee.

I reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4591, as amended, the VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act.

Since the very beginning of the Electronic Health Record Modernization, or the EHRM, program, this committee has been requesting accurate and up-to-date lifecycle cost estimates from VA. Despite our requests, VA has never provided a credible lifecycle cost estimate. VA's cost estimates could not withstand even the most basic scrutiny.